



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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*Secretary*  
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*Testimony*

## AN ACT CONVERTING CERTAIN ABANDONED PROPERTY INTO SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR VETERANS.

I believe that sub-section (e) should require OPM approval before DVA takes any property. I am specifically concerned that:

1. DVA may take on more than they can chew and if they end up with properties all over the State, how will they manage them and what will it cost? Between the time DVA takes a property and can get it up and running as veterans housing who will mow the lawn? Plow the driveway? Check to make sure it's not vandalized? etc
2. Monies that DVA has today (i.e. "sufficient resources" although "sufficient resources" can be read multiple ways, money, manpower, etc) may not necessarily be available tomorrow and someone needs to be looking down the road to make sure that the funds are available for the long haul.
3. I assume people envision houses but the legislation speaks to general "real property" which can be anything from houses, vacant land to old environmentally contaminated factory buildings.
4. I also think 150 days is FAR too long for DVA to take the transfer. The longer a property sits idle the greater the potential for break-ins, vandalism, people stealing the cooper, etc. Should any of these things happen, the Treasurer would receive less money once it's sold or the DVA will have to invest more money if they accept the property for reuse. Would suggest that this be reduced to 60 days at most.

This is also not a "theoretical" problem; the State is now in the process of trying to sell a vacant DDS group home. While it was vacant thieves broke it, stole the copper – including the copper from the oil tank which caused the oil in the tank to leak into the basement and the oil made its way into the sump pump which them pumped the oil onto the back lawn. Any money the State would have made from this sale was completely obliterated by the costs of the clean-up.

I would suggest sub-section (e) be revised as follows:

e) Prior to a sale under this section of any real property in a veteran decedent's estate presumed abandoned pursuant to sections 3-63a and 45a-452 and delivered to the Treasurer in accordance with section 3-65a, the Treasurer shall offer to transfer custody and control of such property to the Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, in accordance with such procedures as the Treasurer may prescribe. The Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, with the approval of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, may accept the transfer of custody and control if the Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs, in consultation with the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, determines the property is suitable for veterans' supportive housing and that there are sufficient resources available to adequately manage such property acquisition. The Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs shall have ~~one hundred fifty~~ sixty days to accept the transfer of custody and control following notice of such transfer from the Treasurer. If the Department of Veterans' Affairs fails to accept the transfer within the ~~one hundred fifty~~ sixty day period, the property shall be sold pursuant to the procedure established in subsections (a) to (d), inclusive, of this section. For the purposes of this section, "veteran" has the same meaning as provided in section 27-103.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony, and we appreciate your consideration of our concerns with this legislation. The Office of Policy Management looks forward to working with members of this committee to provide the necessary support and service our veterans who served our country honorably, while still ensuring that costs to the state are controlled and new obligations to state agencies are met.